

## A Strange Stable

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One day while walking in Washington, D. C., at a particularly busy time of day, I turned into what I thought was an alley leading to another street. As I wandered back through the alley, I suddenly noticed that I was in a courtyard. It was a beautiful place with houses looking from two sides into the cobblestone court. There was an enormous tree growing in one corner of the yard with a circular bench built around its base. As I investigated the yard further, I found that the building directly in front of me was a stable. Discovering that it was an unusually clean stable, I decided to investigate further.

I walked up to the door and raised my hand to knock. But wait . . . I could hear voices inside the building. As I stood on the threshold, an elderly colored man opened the door, bowed low, and asked me to enter. I stepped hesitantly through the doorway and paused to accustom my eyes to the dim interior of the room. As the outlines of the room began to fill in, I noticed that tables and benches had been placed inside each stall, thereby making booths of them. Gradually it dawned on me that this stable had been made into a tea room.

The elderly servant bowed me to a vacant booth and placed a menu in my

hands. Ummm!! What wonderful food they served: fried chicken, done to a golden brown and crunchy as I bit into it; mashed potatoes with giblet gravy that melted in my mouth; tossed green salad with a hot spicy vinegar dressing; piping hot beaten biscuits—all I could eat; and, to top it all off, an enormous piece of apple pie completely covered with a mound of home-made ice cream. Just as I was finishing my meal, a little lady with a crown of snow-white hair came over to my table to ask if I should like anything else to eat. I told her I should like to eat more but was unable to find room for it. The atmosphere was so friendly and homelike that I hated to leave. But leave I must, for there were other things to see and do.

I left the courtyard with regret, to enter once more into the hustle and bustle of Washington traffic. As I walked along the street leading from the tea room to the White House, I wondered if I should ever find my way back to that island of peace and quiet in the midst of a sea of noise and confusion. No sound of the passing traffic penetrated to that little courtyard only slightly removed from one of the busiest streets in Washington. Some day, when America has once more returned to normal, I shall go back and endeavor to find that spot once again.